

CLAIMS

What is claimed:

5 1. A method of providing advertising in an electronic program guide for television, said method comprising the steps of:

 delivering an electronic program guide to an addressable unit using a first communication channel;

10 delivering at least one advertisement to said addressable unit in a second communication channel, said at least one advertisement being comprised of an Internet accessible file; and

 inserting said advertisement into said electronic program guide.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said first and second channels are different channels of a single transport stream.

20 3. The method of claim 1 wherein said first channel and said second channel comprise first and second transport streams, respectively.

25 4. The method of claim 3 wherein said first transport stream is one of analog cable, digital cable, digital broadcast satellite and switched digital video.

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5. The method of claim 4 wherein said second transport system comprises the Internet.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said Internet file comprises an HTML file including one or more of a streaming video file, a streaming audio file, a Java file, a FLASH file, and a Javascript file associated therewith.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein said advertisement delivery step comprises the steps of:

storing said at least one advertisement on a network comprising said second channel at a node remote from said addressable unit; and

retrieving, at said addressable unit, said at least one advertisement from said remote node responsive to determination of an advertisement insertion opportunity.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said advertisement delivery step comprises the steps of:

delivering said at least one advertisement to said addressable unit at a time prior to determination of an opportunity to insert said advertisement into said electronic program guide; and

storing said advertisement in a memory local to said addressable unit for later retrieval responsive to determination of an advertisement insertion opportunity.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said insertion step further comprises retrieving said at least one advertisement from said local memory.

5 10. The method of claim 1 wherein said advertisement inserting step comprises the steps of:
determining if the electronic program guide is being viewed;

10 if said electronic program guide is being viewed,
inserting said at least one advertisement into said electronic program guide.

11. The method of claim 1 wherein said at least one advertisement comprises a plurality of advertisements, said method further comprising the steps of:

15 creating a schedule for displaying said advertisements in said electronic program guide; and

wherein said inserting step comprises inserting said advertisements in accordance with said schedule.

20 12. The method of claim 11 wherein said step of creating a schedule comprises storing a queue in a memory, said queue comprising an ordered list of advertisement resource locators (ARLs), each of said ARLs comprising data disclosing a location of a corresponding advertisement.

25 13. The method of claim 12 wherein said queue is stored locally at said subscriber node.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of:
delivering to said subscriber node instructions dictating
how to schedule said advertisements for display in said
5 electronic program guide; and

wherein said step of creating said schedule comprises
executing said instructions.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein said ARLs comprise URLs
10 on the World Wide Web.

16. The method of claim 1 wherein said electronic program
guide includes a plurality of spaces dedicated to insertion of
advertisements and wherein said inserting step comprises
15 inserting an advertisement in each of said spaces.

17. The method of claim 11 wherein said schedule defines
an expiration event for each advertisement and wherein said
method further comprises the steps of:

20 detecting said expiration event for any advertisement
that is being displayed in said electronic program guide;

removing a presently displayed advertisements upon
detection of said expiration event corresponding to said
advertisement;

25 upon removal of any advertisement from said electronic
program guide, consulting said schedule to determine a next

advertisement to be inserted in said electronic program guide;
and

inserting said next advertisement in said electronic
program guide in place of said removed advertisement.

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18. The method of claim 1 wherein said electronic program
guide comprises an HTML file.

10 19. An apparatus for providing advertising in an
electronic program guide for television comprising:

a receiver for receiving an electronic program guide
for television via a first communication channel;

15 a receiver for receiving advertisements via a second
communication channel, said advertisements comprising Internet
based files; and

an advertisement insertion circuit for inserting said
advertisements into said electronic program guide.

20 20. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising a
processing circuit for processing said HTML files to generate
displays corresponding thereto that can be inserted into said
electronic program guide.

25 21. The apparatus of claim 20 wherein said first and
second channels are different channels of the same transport
mechanism.

22. The apparatus of claim 21 wherein said first and second channels comprise different transport mechanisms.

23. The apparatus of claim 22 wherein said first transport mechanism is one of analog cable, digital cable, digital broadcast satellite and switched digital video.

24. The apparatus of claim 23 wherein said second transport mechanism comprises one or more of a DOCSIS modem, a telephone network and the Internet.

25. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said Internet based file comprises an HTML file including one or both of a streaming video file, a streaming audio file, a Java file, a FLASH file, and a Javascript file associated therewith.

26. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:
means for retrieving said advertisements from a remote location coupled to said apparatus via said second transport mechanism responsive to determination of an advertisement insertion opportunity in said electronic program guide.

27. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:
means for retrieving said advertisements at a time prior to determination of an opportunity to insert said advertisement into said electronic program guide; and

a memory for storing said advertisements for later retrieval responsive to determination of an advertisement insertion opportunity in said electronic program guide.

5 28. The apparatus of claim 27 wherein said advertisement insertion circuit comprises means for retrieving said advertisements from said memory.

29. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:

10 a circuit for determining if said electronic program guide is being viewed; and

 wherein said advertisement insertion circuit inserts said advertisements into said electronic program guide only if said circuit for determining determines that said electronic program guide is being viewed.

30. The apparatus of claim 19 further comprising:

 a circuit for creating a schedule for displaying said advertisements in said electronic program guide; and

20 wherein said advertisement insertion circuit inserts said advertisements into said electronic program guide in accordance with said schedule.

31. The apparatus of claim 30 wherein said circuit for
25 creating a schedule creates a queue in a memory, said queue comprising an ordered list of advertisement resource locators

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(ARLs), each of said ARLs comprising data disclosing a location of a corresponding advertisement.

32. The apparatus of claim 31 further comprising:

5 a receiver for receiving instructions dictating how to order said ARLs in said queue; and

wherein said circuit for creating said schedule does so in accordance with said instructions.

10 33. The apparatus of claim 32 wherein said ARLs comprise URLs on the World Wide Web.

34. The apparatus of claim 19 wherein said schedule defines an expiration event for each advertisement and wherein
15 said advertisement insertion circuit further comprises:

means for detecting said expiration event for any advertisement that has been displayed in said electronic program guide;

20 means for removing said displayed advertisement upon detection of said corresponding expiration event; and

means for consulting said schedule upon removal of any advertisement from said electronic program guide to determine a next advertisement to be inserted in said electronic program guide and inserting said next advertisement in said electronic
25 program guide in place of said removed advertisement.